

Activity 4: Deep Breaths

Many of us hear advice that suggests something like this: “When you get angry at a co-worker, and before you fly off the handle, take a deep breath.”

Disagreement is not something to be avoided; diversity of opinions and perspectives is actually an advantage at work. Yet discussions that include disagreement require a bit of extra care. If not respectfully managed, these conversations can easily create tensions that become non-productive and have effects far past the original conversation.

In the space below, record a few words or phrases to actually say to yourself — and to the other person(s) involved — when you feel a conversation heating up and moving in an unpleasant and unproductive direction.

Share your results with a colleague. See what questions or statements they use, and compare these to your own.

What trigger words and/or phrases might you use (to think or say to yourself, to remind you to pause, back up, take that deep breath) to help you manage this type of conversation with greater respect and better results?

What are some phrases you could use with the other person to respectfully manage their frustration or stress?